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Live Healthy, Be Active

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If you don't exercise regularly, it's time to start.

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Have you ever wished that you had more energy or fewer aches and pains?

You're not alone. The good news is that regardless of age or ability, physical activity improves your health and well-being. Everyone can benefit from regular exercise. In fact, being active enhances your overall quality of life in a variety of ways.

Benefits of Physical Activity 1

- Controls weight
- Reduces stress
- Boosts mood
- Improves sleep
- Lowers risk of chronic disease
- Strengthens bones and muscles
- Enhances wound healing

Navy Medicine Video

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- Increases life expectancy

Unfortunately, less than half of all adults in the United States get the recommended physical activity needed each week.² Don't be one of them! Take the time today to review the guidelines for physical activity, discover ways to incorporate new exercises into your daily routine, and get your kids involved so that you and your family can live longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

Guidelines for Physical Activity

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services manages the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, which includes information and recommendations on the types and amount of physical activity that provide health benefits. The most recent guidelines for adults (those ages 18-64) include¹:

- Engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise each week to reduce the risk of chronic disease or prevent weight gain
- Engage in at least 300 minutes of moderate-intensity or 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise each week to lose weight and keep it off
- Engage in moderate or high-intensity muscle strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups on two or more days a week

Fitness Levels

There's an activity for every fitness level. Whether you want to start a new routine or refresh an old one, there are activities and programs out there to help you meet your fitness goals. Any amount of physical activity will provide some health benefits. Check out the resources at HPW Active Living and follow these tips:

Start up

If you don't exercise regularly, it's time to start. Try one of these activities to get moving:

- Go for a brisk walk
- Try biking or swimming
- Use the elliptical trainer or treadmill
- Mow the lawn or rake leaves
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Garden or do yard work

Change up

If you hit a plateau with your usual fitness regimen, it's time to revitalize your workout. Try one of these activities to mix up your routine:

- Attend a new exercise class, such as Spinning® or Pilates

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Try a new piece of gym equipment, such as a rowing machine or stair climber

- Learn a new sport, such as tennis or boxing
- Enter a walking or running race or competition
- Switch the days that you engage in aerobic and strength training activities
- Alter the intensity of your workout
- Contact your Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Fitness Center for a schedule of exercise classes and events

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Step up

If you are a service member and you already train regularly, it may be time to challenge yourself. Try one of these activities to take your fitness to the next level:

- Get started with Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS), which was developed in partnership with physical fitness experts who train professional athletes to provide a “best in class” physical fitness and nutrition performance resource
- Check out the USMC Fitness Readiness Guide for resources on how to optimize performance gains and combat conditioning
- Try out for All-Navy Sports, which allow Sailors to represent the Navy and compete at high-level athletic competitions, such as the Armed Forces Championships

Family Fitness

Kids can experience the same health benefits from physical activity as their adult family members. That's why the Physical Activity Guidelines recommend an hour or more of physical activity a day for children ages 6-17.² According to the 2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, less than 30 percent of children in the United States were physically active for at least 60 minutes a day for a seven day period and more than 30 percent watched three or more hours of television per day on an average school day.³ That's not acceptable!

If you want to reverse these trends and improve your kids' health, it's time to plan some group activities. Try one of these options to get everyone in your family exercising together:

- Take a family walk or bike ride after dinner
- Sign up for a charity walk or run as a team
- Go to a park and play tag
- Set up a family obstacle course in the backyard
- Organize a family basketball game
- Challenge a neighboring family to a softball game

Remember, whether you're a service member, beneficiary, or government civilian, regular exercise can improve your health and enhance your quality of life. It's never too late to get started. You and your family can be physically fit at any age, so get moving today!

References

- 1 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/paguide.pdf>. Published October 2008. Accessed February 2015.
- 2 Facts About Physical Activity. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Activity. <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/data/facts.html>. Updated 23 May 2014. Accessed February 2015.
- 3 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>. Published June 2014. Accessed February 2015.

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